

# The Squeaker Speaks

## A List of Clarinet Orchestral Excerpts You Must Know Well

– Nicholas Murphy

I had taken around eight professional orchestral clarinet auditions before obtaining my current position in Queensland. Based on my experiences in that time I have compiled a list of orchestral excerpts which I believe university level students should know very well if they are serious about obtaining a professional orchestra position. The works I have listed are important because they appear frequently on audition lists. I intend this to be a useful guide and obviously there will be a lot of material which can be added. If students have proficiency in and detailed knowledge of all of the material on this list however, I suspect they will find the process of preparing for their orchestral auditions much more a matter of refinement than of learning from scratch. This will be particularly valuable when preparing for more than one audition or preparing large lists. The majority of my experiences pertain to Australian auditions, however I have included material I have come across overseas which would be valuable to know.

**Symphony and Chamber Orchestra Excerpts:** (Principal Clarinet Excerpts are also asked for second chair auditions)

Almost always requested:

Beethoven	<i>Symphony No. 6</i> (in particular) <i>Symphony No. 4</i> (Slow movement and articulated passage in last movement) <i>Symphony No. 8</i> (Trio)
Brahms	<i>Symphony No. 4</i>
Mendelssohn	<i>Midsummer Nights Dream</i> - Scherzo <i>Symphony No. 4</i> (Finale)
Rachmaninov	<i>Second Symphony</i> (slow solo - plus articulated passages)
Prokofiev	<i>Peter and the Wolf</i>
Ravel	<i>Daphnis and Chloe</i>
Sibelius	<i>Symphony No. 1</i>
Respighi	<i>Pines of Rome</i>
Ginastera	<i>Variatione Concertantes</i>

Kodaly	<i>Galanta Dances</i>
Often Requested:	
Brahms	<i>Symphony No. 3</i>
Tchaikovsky	<i>Symphonies 4, 5 or 6</i>
Mendelssohn	<i>Symphony No. 3</i>
Rimsky - Korsakov	<i>Scheherazade</i> <i>Capriccio Espagnole</i> <i>The Mother Goose</i>
Ravel	<i>Afternoon of a Faun</i>
Debussy	<i>Concerto for Orchestra</i>
Bartok	<i>Miraculous Mandarin</i> <i>Firebird</i>
Stravinsky	<i>Symphony No. 1 or 5</i>
Shostakovich	<i>Oboe Concerto</i> (Clarinet Solos)
Strauss	

Have appeared in Australia more than once in the last ten years:

Brahms	<i>Symphony No. 1</i>
Tchaikovsky	<i>Francesca da Rimini</i>
Stravinsky	<i>Petrouchka</i>
Shostakovich	<i>Cello Concerto</i>
Nielsen	<i>Flute Concerto</i> (Flute/Clarinet Cadenza)
R. Strauss	<i>Also Sprach Zarathustra</i> <i>Don Juan</i> <i>Till Eulenspiegel</i>

Other important excerpts to know:

Mozart	<i>Symphonies No. 39 and 40</i>
Schubert	<i>Unfinished and Ninth Symphony</i>
Berlioz	<i>Symphony Fantastique</i>
Prokofiev	<i>Symphonies 1 and 5</i>
Mills	<i>Sequenzas Concertantes</i> - Clarinet cadenza

**Symphony and Chamber Orchestra Excerpts specific to second chair auditions** (i.e. learn the second part):

Tchaikovsky	<i>Symphony No. 5</i> (opening)
Bartok	<i>Miraculous Mandarin</i>
Bartok	<i>Concerto for Orchestra</i>
Beethoven	Slow Movement from <i>Ninth Symphony</i>
Mendelssohn	<i>Hebrides</i> <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> Scherzo (second part)

Britten	<i>Four Sea Interludes</i> - Second Player doubles on Eb
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Debussy	<i>La Mer</i>
Ravel	<i>Daphnis and Chloe</i>

**Opera and Ballet Orchestra Excerpts** (In Australia orchestras in Queensland, Adelaide and Perth play in the pit so expect these excerpts to come up frequently):

Mozart	<i>Così fan Tutti</i> , <i>Magic Flute</i> , <i>Don Giovanni</i> , <i>Figaro</i>
Rossini	<i>Barber of Seville</i> - Overture, Act I Finale, "Largo al Factotum"
Verdi	<i>Traviata</i> , <i>Rigoletto</i> , <i>La Forza del Destino</i> (very important)
Puccini	<i>Bohème</i> , <i>Butterfly</i> , <i>Tosca</i> (very important)
Tchaikovsky	<i>Nutcracker</i>
Delibes	<i>Copelia</i>
Stravinsky	<i>Rake's Progress</i> , <i>Bluebird</i> solo
Britten	<i>Peter Grimes</i>
Janacek	<i>Jenufa</i>
Prokofiev	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , <i>Cinderella</i> (cadenzas very difficult)
Strauss	<i>Rosenkavalier</i> , <i>Salome</i> , <i>Elektra</i>
Smetana	<i>Bartered Bride</i>
Borodin	<i>Polovetsian Dances</i>
Wagner	Practice various excerpts for stylistic familiarity

**E Flat excerpts regularly appearing in Associate Principal Clarinet auditions:**

Berlioz	<i>Witch's Sabbath</i>
Ravel	<i>Daphnis and Chloe</i> , <i>Bolero</i> , <i>Piano Concerto in G</i> <i>Miraculous Mandarin</i>
Bartok	<i>Rite of Spring</i>
Stravinsky	<i>Symphony No. 5</i> and 7
Shostakovich	<i>Till Eulenspiegel</i> , <i>Salome</i> for Opera Orchestras
Strauss	<i>Symphonies 1 and 9</i> (preferably all symphonies requiring E flat)
Mahler	

## Bass Clarinet:

Forget it.

At least you know you will have plenty of preparation time for a bass clarinet audition. The next one will probably be in the next century. Impossible jobs to get - lifestyle is too good!!! Players stay in the job until they have to be carried out in a coffin. (According to Brian Catchlove there have been three Bass Clarinet auditions in the last ten years, although I had always thought the last Bass audition was sometime in the sixties).

Strauss	<i>Till Eulenspiegel, Also Sprach Zarathustra, Don Quixote</i>
Shostakovich	<i>Symphonies 8 and 11 (also know 6 and 7)</i>
Stravinsky	<i>Rite of Spring, Petrouchka</i>
Ravel	<i>La Valse, Daphnis and Chloe</i>

Grofe	<i>Grand Canyon Suite</i>
Tchaikovsky	<i>Nutcracker</i>
Gershwin	<i>An American in Paris</i>
Dukas	<i>Sorcerer's Apprentice</i>
Mahler	<i>Symphony No. 6 (Plus as much of others as possible)</i>
Prokofiev	<i>Symphonies and Ballets</i>
Verdi	<i>Traviata, Rigoletto</i>

### Some points to remember:

- Orchestral auditions will often follow patterns, i.e. the same orchestra might ask similar excerpts for successive auditions.
- Despite its importance in the performing repertoire, Ginastera *Variatione Concertantes* seems to have become standard repertoire in Australia.
- Study each excerpt for a couple of weeks as you would for an audition, then put it away to further refine at a later time.

- Search for the most reliable editions of excerpts - some publications have markings which are rarely performed. Current players are the best source for this information. Visit the orchestra libraries in your state to find the best versions.
- Practice adhering to the simple details of what is printed in the parts, much of this detail is often missed, and is one of the most easily noticed features amongst the non - clarinet players on the panel.
- Listen to your own playing through the use of recording equipment.
- Play your excerpts for as many willing or unwilling ears as possible.

– Nicholas Murphy is principal clarinettist of the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra